

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
----- 042865

O R 311741Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 287

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 DAMASCUS 7451

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM MURPHY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, SY, EG, US

SUBJECT: OUTCOME OF THE RIYADH AND CAIRO SUMMITS ON THE LEBANESE  
PROBLEM

REF: STATE 268211

1. SUMMARY: YOUR VIEWS ON THE RIYADH AGREEMENT HAD OVERALL POSITIVE  
EFFECT ON KHADDAM BUT HE WANTS TO KNOW WHAT LIES BEHIND  
WHAT HE VIEWS AS AN UNNECESSARY CONCERN ON OUR PART FOR  
LEBANON'S CHRISTIANS. FOR HIS PART HE WANTS YOU TO KNOW  
SYRIA WILL CONTINUE ITS CONSISTENT POLICY OF PROMOTING  
CONFESSIONAL COEXISTENCE. END SUMMARY

2. MET WITH KHADDAM FOR ONE AND ONE-HALF HOURS  
OCTOBER 31. BEFORE I COULD MAKE PRESENTATION REFTTEL,  
KHADDAM PRODUCED A PIECE OF PAPER SAYING THAT HE HAD SOME  
POINTS HE WISHED TO RELAY TO YOU. HE THEN READ THE  
FOLLOWING:

THE SYRIAN POSITION ON LEBANON IS THAT  
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(A) DAMASCUS IS ANXIOUS TO SEE THE CAIRO AND RIYADH SUMMITS SUCCEED AND AN EARLY END TO FIGHTING IN LEBANON. IT CONSIDERS THE SUMMIT RESOLUTIONS, WHEN IMPLEMENTED, TO BE A SOUND BASIS FOR ENDING THE WAR.

(B) SYRIA WILL EXERT EVERY POSSIBLE EFFORT TO IMPLEMENT THE RESOLUTIONS BECAUSE CONTINUATION OF FIGHTING WILL HAVE DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON ALL PARTIES. RESTORATION OF PEACE WILL HAVE A POSITIVE RESULT IN LEBANON, THE ARAB WORLD AND INTERNATIONALLY.

(C) SYRIA IS PLEASED AT THE UNANIMITY SHOWN BY THE ARABS OVER THE NEED TO ESTABLISH PEACE IN LEBANON. THAT UNANIMITY HAS VINDICATED THE CONSISTENT AND INDEPENDENT SYRIAN NATIONAL POLICY AIMED AT SECURING PEACE IN LEBANON.

(D) DESPITE THE PRESSURES WHICH SYRIA HAS FACED FROM MANY SIDES, AND THE CONTINUATION OF THESE PRESSURES, WE ARE CONVINCED THAT THE CONTINUATION OF FIGHTING IN LEBANON CONSTITUTES A GRAVE DANGER TO THE UNITY OF THE LEBANESE PEOPLE AS WELL AS TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY.

(E) SOME PARTIES MAY TRY TO BLOCK IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUMMIT RESOLUTIONS. BUT SYRIA BELIEVES THAT SARKIS, WHO ENJOYS ARAB AND INTERNATIONAL BACKING, WILL BE ABLE TO OVERCOME SUCH OBSTACLES.

(F) THE MEETING BETWEEN SADAT AND ASAD PLAYED A POSITIVE ROLE IN THE SUCCESS OF THE RIYADH AND CAIRO SUMMITS. UNQUESTIONABLY THE TWO PRESIDENTS' MEETING WAS A GOOD DEVELOPMENT WHICH WE HOPE WILL HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON SYRO-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS.

3. I THEN RELAYED YOUR IMPRESSIONS OF THE RIYADH AGREEMENT AS SET FORTH PARA 2 REFTEL (MINUS SUB-PARAS D AND E), NOTING THAT THESE WERE PRELIMINARY VIEWS AND THAT YOU WOULD WELCOME ANY COMMENTS KHADDAM MIGHT MAKE. KHADDAM NOTED THAT IN HIS OWN OPENING REMARKS, HE HAD ALREADY RESPONDED TO CERTAIN OF THESE POINTS. HE RE-

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ITERATED THAT SYRIA EXPECTS SOME ELEMENTS WILL TRY TO SABOTAGE THE SUMMIT RESOLUTIONS BUT IS CONFIDENT THAT SARKIS WILL BE ABLE TO OVERCOME THESE OBSTACLES BECAUSE HE NOW ENJOYS NOT ONLY ARAB AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT BUT WIDESPREAD SUPPORT WITHIN LEBANON. THE GENERAL FEELING IN LEBANON TODAY IS THAT THERE MUST BE COOPERATION TO MOVE THE PEACE PROCESS FORWARD.

4. PLO: ADDRESSING HIMSELF TO PARA 2(F), KHADDAM SAID THAT SINCE THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTING THE SUMMIT RESOLUTIONS HAS NOT YET BEGUN, "IT IS NOT EASY TO RELATE THOSE RESOLUTIONS TO MOVEMENT ON THE GROUND TODAY. SYRIAN FORCES," HE CONTINUED, "ARE NOT IN SOUTH LEBANON." BUT AS SOON AS THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCE (ADF) IS FORMED UNDER SARKIS' CONTROL, IT WILL IMPOSE PEACE THROUGHOUT LEBANON. KHADDAM PREDICTS THE ADF WILL BE ESTABLISHED IN LESS THAN A WEEK; EACH DAY'S DELAY RISKS EXPLODING A FRAGILE SITUATION. I THEN ASKED SPECIFICALLY WHETHER SYRIA TODAY CAN KEEP THOSE FEDAYEEN WHO MAY WANT TO RENEW CROSS BORDER ACTIONS OUT OF THE ARQUB AREA. KHADDAM REPLIED THAT SYRIA DID NOT YET CONTROL ACCESS TO THE SOUTH FROM SIDON AND BEIRUT. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT CERTAIN ELEMENTS, CITING IRAQ AND PFLP, MAY INTEND TO SABOTAGE THE RIYADH RESOLUTIONS. FOR THE MOMENT ALL HE COULD SAY WAS THAT THERE IS SECURITY IN THOSE AREAS WHERE SYRIAN FORCES ARE IN PLACE. HE DID NOT VOLUNTEER ANY DIRECT COMMENTS ABOUT INTERDICTING CROSS BORDER ACTIONS BUT ASSERTED THAT THE ORDINARY PALESTINIAN WANTS RESTORATION OF PEACE IN LEBANON AND THAT PALESTINIAN ATTENTION WAS FOCUSED ON HELPING CREATE CONDITIONS FOR PEACE. SAID I DID NOT NEED REMIND HIM THAT HISTORY OF RECENT YEARS HAD REPEATEDLY DEMONSTRATED HOW DISRUPTIVE TO PEACE IN LEBANON HAD BEEN CROSS BORDER ACTIONS BY FEDAYEEN. KHADDAM REPLIED MATTER OF FACTLY THAT "ISRAEL HAS AN INTEREST IN CONTINUATION OF TROUBLES IN THE AREA." I SAID THAT HOWEVER HE WANTED TO INTERPRET ISRAELI ATTITUDES IT WAS ALL IMPORTANT THAT THE ISRAELIS HAVE NO REASON, SUCH AS RESUMPTION OF FEDAYEEN ACTIVITY ACROSS THE BORDER, TO INTERVENE.

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5. CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES: COMMENTING ON PRESENTATION 2(G), OF REFTTEL, KHADDAM SAID THAT ACCORDING TO HIS INFORMATION LEBANESE CHRISTIAN LEADERS CONSIDER THE RIYADH-CAIRO RESOLUTIONS TO BE OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE AND SUPPORT THEM. A CHRISTIAN DELEGATION TO DAMASCUS ONLY LAST THURSDAY HAD REAFFIRMED THIS TO HIM. SYRIA SEES NO REASON THAT THE CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR EXISTENCE AS A COMMUNITY IN LEBANON. LEBANESE CHRISTIANS CORRECTLY SEE THEMSELVES AS PART OF LEBANON AND THE ARAB NATION. THE STRAIGHTFORWARD AND UNBIASED ATTITUDE OF SYRIA, WHICH HAS CONSISTENTLY REFUSED TO BE DRAWN INTO TAKING SIDES IN ANY FACTIONAL DISPUTE, CONSTITUTES FURTHER REASSURANCE FOR THE CHRISTIANS. IN ASAD'S JULY 20 SPEECH, THE PRESIDENT HAD MADE CLEAR SYRIA WAS NOT FIGHTING FOR EITHER THE CHRISTIAN OR MUSLIM SIDE. FURTHERMORE, AT RIYADH AND CAIRO, SARKIS HAD BEEN A KEY FIGURE

IN FRAMING THE RESOLUTIONS. SARKIS IS IN TOUCH WITH ALL LEBANESE PARTIES, BOTH CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM. "HE HAS CLOSE RELATIONS WITH FRANGIE AND GEMAYEL AND GOOD TIES WITH CHAMOUN." (COMMENT: KHADDAM CAREFULLY DISTINGUISHED BETWEEN THOSE RELATIONS.) SYRIA WILL OPPOSE ANY ACTION TENDING TO CREATE A NEW CONFESSIONAL CRISIS OR TO CONTINUE THE EXISTING ONE IN LEBANON. FOR DAMASCUS, LEBANESE MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS SHARE EQUALLY IN THE RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF LEBANESE CITIZENSHIP. THE CHRISTIANS KNOW THAT ACTIONS AIMED AT STIMULATING CONFESSIONAL TENSIONS HAVE NOT TAKEN PLACE IN THOSE AREAS WHERE SYRIAN FORCES HAVE BEEN PRESENT. SYRIA HAS NOT AND WILL NEVER ACT ON A CONFESSIONAL BASIS.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 DAMASCUS 7451

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM MURPHY

6. KHADDAM EMPHATICALLY AGREED THAT NO CIRCUMSTANCES MUST BE CREATED WHICH WILL ALLOW EXTREMISTS ON EITHER SIDE IN LEBANON TO IMPEDE ESTABLISHMENT OF PEACE. HE RECALLED THAT EARLIER THIS YEAR SYRIA HAD BEEN PRESSURED BY CERTAIN EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN NATIONS TO SUPPORT JUMBLATT AND HIS GROUP AGAINST THE LEBANESE CHRISTIANS WHOM THE EUROPEANS CONSIDERED AGGRESSORS. SYRIA WAS CRITICIZED

BECAUSE IT STOPPED JUMBLATT FROM CARRYING OUT HIS PLAN  
FOR "FACTIONAL SLAUGHTER."

7. KHADDAM THEN SAID HE WAS CURIOUS ABOUT THE  
REASON FOR THE SECRETARY'S CONCERN ABOUT LEBANON'S  
CHRISTIANS. THE SECRETARY'S COMMENTS ABOUT EXTREMIST  
CHRISTIANS WERE CORRECT BUT, IN KHADDAM'S OPINION,  
THE CHRISTIANS' COMMUNAL EXISTENCE IN LEBANON HAD NOTHING  
TO DO WITH THE ACTIONS OF CHRISTIAN EXTREMISTS. THOSE  
EXTREMISTS CANNOT IMPOSE THEIR POLICY ON THE ENTIRE  
CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, JUST AS PALESTINIAN EXTREMISTS  
CANNOT IMPOSE THEIR WILL ON THE WHOLE PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY.  
"DR. KISSINGER HAS MADE HIS CONCERN VERY CLEAR BUT I DO  
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NOT FIND IT JUSTIFIED." HE ASKED IF THERE ANY INFORMATION  
IN USG HANDS OF A REAL NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THE CHRISTIANS'  
COMMUNAL STATUS, AND/OR HAD "CERTAIN SOURCES" GIVEN  
WASHINGTON THE IMPRESSION THERE NEED BE SUCH CONCERN? THE  
CAIRO/RIYADH RESOLUTIONS HAD LAID OUT A BASIS  
FOR RESOLVING THE WAR IN LEBANON. IT HAD BEEN WELCOMED  
BY THE CHRISTIANS. DO OUR QUESTIONS INDICATE THAT WE  
KNOW OF CIRCLES IN LEBANON, AND OUTSIDE OF THAT COUNTRY,  
WHICH REMAIN UNEASY AND ARE EXPRESSING THEIR FEARS TO  
US?

8. I REPLIED THAT THE CONTEXT OF YOUR MESSAGE MADE  
CLEAR YOU WERE EXPRESSING CONCERN ABOUT THE DANGERS  
THREATENING PEACE FROM EXTREMISTS IN BOTH THE PLO AND  
THE CHRISTIAN CAMPS. RECALLED THAT KHADDAM AND I HAD  
DISCUSSED ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS IN THE PAST THE  
"REFUGEE COMPLEX" OF THE LEBANESE. THE "REFUGEE COMPLEX"  
WAS NOT RESTRICTED TO PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON. MANY  
OTHER GROUPS ALSO HAVE NEVER FORGOTTEN THEY THEMSELVES  
WERE ONCE REFUGEES. CLEARLY THE WAY THE "REFUGEE  
COMPLEX" IS HANDLED CAN BE EXPLOITED BY EXTREMISTS.  
ONE SUMMIT CONFERENCE, HOWEVER SUCCESSFUL IT MAY BE,  
CANNOT IN ITSELF END APPREHENSIONS WHICH HAVE LASTED  
FOR CENTURIES. KHADDAM AGREED BUT ADDED HE WOULD APPRECIATE  
HEARING WHETHER THERE WAS ANYTHING MORE  
SPECIFIC BEHIND YOUR ANALYSIS OF CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES.

9. SUMMING UP SYRIA'S VIEWS OF HOW THE LEBANESE SITUATION  
WILL EVOLVE, HE SAID "WE ARE NOT PESSIMISTIC AND ARE  
EXERTING EVERY EFFORT TO SET UP THE ADF AS QUICKLY AS  
POSSIBLE. SARKIS HAS OUR FULL CONFIDENCE." SYRIA BELIEVES  
SARKIS HAS THE ABILITY TO CARRY OUT THE RIYADH RESOLUTIONS  
AND SYRIA IS DOING EVERYTHING IT CAN THROUGH ITS CONTACTS  
IN LEBANON TO ASSIST THE PRESIDENT. ACCORDING TO SYRIA'S  
INFORMATION, LEBANESE PUBLIC OPINION IS ANXIOUS FOR PEACE

AS ARE MOST LEBANESE LEADERS. SARKIS STILL MUST DEAL  
WITH EXTREMIST FACTIONS ON BOTH SIDES.  
ASKED HOW THE US MIGHT BE HELPFUL IN REINFORCING THE  
TREND SET IN MOTION BY THE RIYADH AGREEMENT, KHADDAM  
REPLIED SIMPLY THAT HE HOPED WE WOULD "ENCOURAGE THE  
VARIOUS FACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE SUMMIT RESOLUTIONS."

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I REMINDED HIM OF THE INSTRUCTIONS I HAD JUST REVIEWED WITH HIM  
WHICH WE WERE GIVING OUR CHARGE IN BEIRUT FOR HIS UPCOMING MEETINGS  
WITH CHRISTIAN LEADERS. KHADDAM SAID THIS SHOULD  
BE HELPFUL TO THE GENERAL PEACE PROCESS.

10. COMMENT: IT IS PROBABLY TOO MUCH TO SAY THAT OUR PRESENTATION  
ABOUT CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES MADE KHADDAM SUSPECT  
WE WERE HINTING AT POSSIBLE USG ACTION TO SUPPORT  
THE CHRISTIANS. BUT HE WENT TO CONSIDERABLE LENGTH TO  
EXPLAIN SYRIA'S NON-CONFESSIONAL APPROACH TO THE LEBANESE  
CRISIS AND IF FELT THAT EVEN AFTER MY EXPLANATION THAT  
YOUR INTENTION HAD BEEN TO OUTLINE POTENTIAL THREATS TO  
THE SUMMITS' ACHIEVEMENTS FROM BOTH PLO AND CHRISTIAN  
EXTREMISTS HE REMAINED UNEASY. (THIS WOULD NOT BE A  
SURPRISING REACTION ON HIS PART GIVEN THE NUMBER OF FOREIGN  
NATIONS WHO HAVE SOUGHT TO "CHAMPION CHRISTIAN RIGHTS" IN  
THIS PART OF THE WORLD OVER THE GENERATIONS.) OTHERWISE I  
BELIEVE HE WAS PLEASED WITH THE CONGRUITY BETWEEN OUR  
RESPECTIVE ANALYSES OF THE SUMMITS' RESULTS.  
MURPHY

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